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AUTHOR Knight, William E.

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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted examining the characteristics and experiences of spring 1991 Kent State University (KSU) baccalaureate degree recipients who were originally enrolled in one of the seven regional two-year college campuses (RC's). Data were available for 177 degree recipients, representing 92% of all graduates who had originated at the RC's, and comprising 13.5% of the total 1991 graduating population. For comparative purposes, data were gathered for 1991 graduates who had begun their educational career at KSU and for graduates who had transferred to KSU from another four-year college. Study findings included the following: (1) 91% of former two-year college students were white and 61% were female; (2) final cumulative grade point averages were higher for former RC students (3.13 on a four-point scale) than for either KSU entrants (3.04) or other transfer students (3.04); (3) the average cumulative credit hours for RC entrants was 145.7, as compared to 142.1 for KSU entrants, and 148.5 for other transfer students; (4) the average age at graduation was 29 years for RC entrants, 23 for KSU entrants, and 26 for other transfer students; (5) RC entrants averaged 84 credit hours at KSU, and fewer than 25% stopped out during their enrollment at KSU; (6) there were no significant differences in RC entrant semesters or credit hours completed at KSU by gender or ethnicity, nor were there differences in total semesters at KSU by RC attended; and (7) RC entrants completed an average of 11 semesters from RC enrollment to KSU graduation, compared with 10 semesters for KSU entrants. Data tables are included. (PAA)

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BACHELORS DEGREE STUDY

The Experiences of May 1991 Bachelors Degree Graduates of Kent State University Who Entered From the Regional Campuses

Kent State University Regional Campuses
Office of Academic Assessment and Evaluation Services

August 1991

William E. Knight, Coordinator, Academic Assessment and Evaluation Services, Regional Campuses

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: BACHELORS DEGREE STUDY: THE EXPERIENCES OF MAY, 1991 BACHELORS DEGREE GRADUATES OF KENT STATE UNIVERSITY WHO ENTERED FROM THE REGIONAL CAMPUSES

AUTHOR: William E. Knight, Coordinator, Academic Assessment and Evaluation Services, Regional Campuses

SUBJECT: A Study of Factors Associated with Bachelors Degree Attainment of Students Relocating from the Regional Campuses

DATE: August, 1991

SOURCE OF COPIES: Kent State University Regional Campuses
Lincoln Building, Kent, Ohio 44242, (216) 672-2330

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SUMMARY: This study was undertaken to describe the cumulative credit hours, grade point averages, and other relevant characteristics of bachelors degree graduates who began their enrollment at the Regional Campuses and to contrast this information with that for students who began at Kent and for those who transferred from other institutions. Its results may assist in understanding the experiences of Regional Campuses students who relocate to Kent and may be beneficial to enrollment management, student services, and institutional planning.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This study was undertaken to describe the characteristics and experiences of May 1991 bachelors degree graduates of Kent State University who began their enrollment at the Regional Campuses and later relocated to Kent. This group represented 192 students or 13.5% of May 1991 bachelors degree recipients. Complete information was available for 177 or 92% of this group.

Profile of the 1991 Bachelors Degree Graduates Who Were Regional Campus Entrants

The profile of these students, given in detail on pages 4-6, shows that 92% were Caucasian, 61% were female, and their average age was 29. There were wide and representative distributions of campuses from which students relocated and colleges in which they were enrolled. Students most frequently graduated in the following majors: elementary education, nursing, accounting, psychology, and general studies. Students were enrolled an average of 5 semesters and completed an average of 62 credit hours before relocating to Kent.

Comparisons with Kent Campus Entrants and Transfer Students

Comparisons of several factors were made between students who began at Kent, students who began at the Regional Campuses, and transfer students. Final cumulative grade point averages were higher for Regional Campus entrants (3.13) than for Kent entrants (3.04) or transfer students (3.04). The average cumulative credit hours at graduation for Regional Campus entrants (145.7) was midway between that for Kent entrants (142.1) and that for transfer students (148.5). The average age at graduation was 29 for Regional Campus Entrants, 23 for Kent entrants, and 26 for transfer students.

Time and Credit Hours to Degree at Kent

Students averaged 6 semesters of enrollment at Kent after they relocated from the Regional Campuses with a range from 1 semester to 12. This compares to an average of 8 semesters at Kent before graduation for transfer students. Available information suggests most Regional Campus entrants were enrolled each consecutive semester after relocating to Kent; fewer than about one-forth of students "stopped out" during their Kent enrollment. Regional Campus entrants averaged 84 credit hours of enrollment at Kent with a range of 7 to 176 credit hours.

Factors Related to Enrollment and Performance

There were no significant differences in semesters or credit hours completed at Kent by gender or ethnicity. There were no significant differences in semesters at Kent by College. A lower percentage of students completed 76 or more credit hours at Kent in the College of Education and a higher percentage completed high numbers of credit hours in the College of Arts and Sciences. Older students completed significantly fewer credit hours at Kent prior to graduation. Regional Campus entrants showed a mean grade point average of 3.11 at their Regional Campus and a mean final grade point average of 3.13 upon graduation, suggesting no overall differences in performance after relocation and no "grade inflation" at any of the campuses.

Conclusions

Students averaged a total of 11 semesters from initial Regional Campus enrollment to graduation at Kent with a bachelors degree. This differs only slightly from an average of 10 total semesters for students starting at Kent. Perhaps more instructive is the fact that the difference in total credit hours to degree at graduation reflected an average difference of only one course (146 compared to 142) between students beginning at the Regional Campuses and students beginning at Kent. There was virtually no difference in grade point averages for students before they relocated to Kent and when they graduated.

Additional more qualitative studies may be necessary to provide more complete information regarding the experiences and perceptions of Regional Campus entrants who continue their studies at Kent.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Kent State University Regional Campuses are a group of seven community-oriented institutions serving the educational needs of northeastern Ohio through the provision of associate degree programs, baccalaureate-parallel coursework, and developmental and continuing education. Approximately 8,000 students are enrolled in the Regional Campuses. Two-thirds are female and the average age of students is 27. Some 400 to 500 baccalaureate-seeking students relocated to the Kent Campus to continue their studies during the 1990 calendar year.

Students at the Regional Campuses and students who have relocated to Kent differ from traditional college students in many ways. Most at Kent and all at the Regional Campuses are commuter students, the majority are enrolled part-time, and most combine college with occupational and family responsibilities. They are older and often less academically prepared than their peers at the Kent Campus. Regional Campus students, including those who relocate to Kent, also exhibit complex enrollment patterns. Students relocate to Kent at various points in their programs and often devote considerably more time than a total of four years towards a baccalaureate degree. This study documents aspects of their enrollment behavior to describe the characteristics, performance, and persistence of Regional Campus entrants as they work to obtain their baccalaureate degrees.

Study Methodology

This study is based upon the student master records of 177 students who were originally enrolled in the Regional Campuses, relocated to Kent, and graduated with a bachelors degree in May 1991. This sample represents 92% of this entire group who began at Regional Campuses; complete information was not available for analysis for the remaining 8%. Regional Campus entrants accounted for 13.5% of the total group of graduates; Kent entrants comprised 880 or 62%, transfer students 303 or 21% and specially admitted students 43 or 3.5%. Each record included the relocation date, gender, ethnicity, total credit hours completed, major, age, cumulative grade point average, and entering campus for each graduate at the time of graduation.

Information concerning the number of semesters of "stopping out" (not attending but later returning) once they reached Kent was not readily available for this group. The information which was available from the Student Flow Model suggested most students are enrolled continuously at Kent with no "stop out," and the average "stop out" for the remaining students was only one semester.

II. RESULTS

A. Profile of May 1991 Regional Campus Entrant Graduates

The profile of May 1991 bachelors degree graduates who were Regional Campus entrants, presented in **Table 1**, shows 92% were Caucasian and 61% were female. Thirty percent were older than 30. Students relocated from a wide range of Regional Campuses and were enrolled in a wide distribution of colleges; these characteristics are representative of the Regional Campuses student profile in general. The graduates represented forty-three different academic majors from all colleges; most frequent majors were elementary education, nursing, accounting, psychology, and general studies.

Sixty four percent of these students graduated with a final cumulative grade point average of between 2.51 and 3.51. Fifty-eight percent attended the Regional Campuses for five or fewer semesters before relocating to Kent. There was a wide distribution of credit hours completed at the Regional Campuses; they ranged from an average of 32 at Geauga to 110 at East Liverpool. Sixty-four percent of the group achieved a cumulative grade point average of between 2.51 and 3.51 before they relocated to Kent; there were no significant differences by campus.

B. Comparisons With Kent Campus Entrants and Transfer Students

Comparisons of several factors were made between students who began at Kent, students who began at the Regional Campuses, and transfer students. Final cumulative grade point averages were higher, although not significantly so, for Regional Campus entrants (3.13) than for Kent entrants (3.04) or transfer students (3.04).

The average cumulative credit hours at graduation for Regional Campus entrants (145.7) was midway between that for Kent entrants (142.1) and that for transfer students (148.5). It is important to note this reflects the equivalent of only one course difference between students who began at the Regional Campuses and students who started at Kent.

The mean age at graduation was 29 for Regional Campus Entrants (median: 26, mode 23), 23 for Kent entrants (median: 23, mode: 22), and 26 for transfer students (median: 24, mode: 22). This comparative information is arrayed in **Table 2.**

C. Time and Credit Hours to Degree at Kent

Students averaged 6 semesters of enrollment at Kent after they relocated from the Regional Campuses with a range from 1 semester to 12 as further shown in **Table 3**. This compares to an average of 8 semesters at Kent before graduation for transfer students. Available information suggests most Regional Campus entrants were enrolled each consecutive semester after relocating to Kent; fewer than about one-forth of students "stopped out" during their Kent enrollment and for most students this "stop out" was only for one semester.

Regional Campus entrants averaged 84 credit hours of enrollment at Kent with a range of 7 to 176 credit hours. This is presented in **Table 4**.

D. Factors Related to Enrollment and Performance

No significant differences in the number of semesters or credit hours to degree after relocation to Kent was found by gender or ethnicity. The semesters students were enrolled at Kent prior to graduation were examined by college as shown in **Table 5**; no significant differences were seen. The number of credit hours students earned at Kent prior to graduation was arrayed by college in **Table 6**. The percentage of students completing 76 or more hours at Kent varied from a low of 38% for students in the College of Education to 66% in the College of Arts and Sciences.

There was a low but significant negative correlation (-.25) between credit hours completed at Kent and age, suggesting older students complete fewer of their courses at Kent. Regional Campus entrants showed a mean grade point average of 3.11 at their Regional Campus and a mean final grade point average of 3.13 upon graduation; the correlation was a strong .76. This suggests no overall differences in performance after relocation and no "grade inflation" at any of the campuses.

Table 1
Summary Characteristics of the May 1991
Bachelors Degree Graduates Who Were
Previously Enrolled in the Regional Campuses

Number of Students:	177	
(This represents a 92% sample of the total 192 graduates.)		
Ethnicity:		
African American	4	(2%)
Asian	2	(1%)
Caucasian	162	(92%)
Unknown	9	(5%)
Gender:		
Female	107	(61%)
Male	70	(39%)
Age at Graduation:		
20-25	90	(51%)
26-30	35	(20%)
31-35	19	(11%)
36-40	19	(11%)
41-45	10	(5%)
46-50	3	(2%)
51-55	1	(<1%)
Average Age = 29		
Previous Campus:		
Ashtabula	14	(8%)
East Liverpool	6	(3%)
Geauga	11	(6%)
Salem	14	(8%)
Stark	66	(37%)
Trumbull	37	(21%)
Tuscarawas	29	(17%)

Table 1 (cont.)
Summary Characteristics of May 1991
Bachelors Degree Graduates Who Were
Previously Enrolled in the Regional Campuses

College		
Arts and Sciences	36	(20%)
Business Administration	43	(24%)
Education	58	(33%)
Fine and Professional Arts	16	(9%)
Nursing	18	(10%)
Physical Education, Recreation and Dance	3	(2%)
Unknown	3	(2%)
Most Frequent Majors:		
Elementary Education	35	(20%)
Nursing	18	(10%)
Accounting	11	(6%)
Psychology	10	(6%)
General Studies	9	(5%)
Cumulative Grade Point Average at Graduation		
3.51-4.00	39	(22%)
3.01-3.50	54	(31%)
2.51-3.00	59	(33%)
2.00-2.50	13	(7%)
Unknown	12	(7%)
Semesters Attended Regional Campuses		
1-5	103	(58%)
6-10	59	(34%)
11-15	11	(6%)
16 or More	4	(2%)

Average Regional Campus Semesters = 5

Table 1 (cont.)
Summary Characteristics of May 1991
Bachelors Degree Graduates Who Were
Previously Enrolled in the Regional Campuses

Credit Hours Completed at Regional Campuses		
1-25	24	(14%)
26-50	48	(27%)
51-75	42	(24%)
76-100	46	(26%)
101-125	10	(6%)
126-150	4	(2%)
151-175	2	(1%)
176 or More	1	(<1%)
Average Regional Campuses Credit Hours = 62		
Regional Campuses Cumulative Grade Point Average:		
3.51-4.00	48	(27%)
3.01-3.50	56	(32%)
2.51-3.00	56	(32%)
2.00-2.50	17	(9%)

Table 2
Comparisons by Entrant Type

	Regional Campuses	Kent	Transfer Students
Cumulative G. P. A.	3.13	3.04	3.04
Credit Hours Completed	145.7	142.1	148.5
Age at Graduation	29	23	26

Table 3
Semesters From Relocation at Kent to Graduation

Semesters	N	%	Cum. %
1	3	2%	2%
2	9	5%	7%
3	24	14%	21%
4	44	25%	46%
5	6	3%	49%
6	49	28%	77%
7	10	6%	83%
8	22	12%	95%
9	0	0%	95%
10	3	2%	97%
11	0	0%	97%
12	2	1%	98%
13	1	<1%	98%
14 or More	4	2%	100%

Table 4
Credit Hours Attained at Kent

Credit Hours	N	%	Cum. %
1-25	4	2%	2%
26-50	21	12%	14%
51-75	55	31%	45%
76-100	38	22%	45%
101-125	39	22%	89%
126-150	16	9%	98%
151-175	3	1%	99%
176 or More	1	<1%	100%

Table 5
Semesters From Relocation at Kent to Graduation
by College

Semesters	A&S	BUSN	EDUC	F&PA	NURS	PERD
1	3%	0%	0%	13%	0%	0%
2	3%	2%	4%	25%	5%	0%
3	11%	10%	24%	13%	0%	0%
4	19%	30%	38%	12%	0%	0%
5	8%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%
6	28%	35%	14%	13%	67%	67%
7	14%	7%	3%	0%	0%	0%
8	11%	12%	9%	6%	28%	33%
9	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
10	0%	0%	3%	6%	0%	0%
11	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
12	3%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
13+	0%	2%	0%	12%	0%	0%

Table 6
Credit Hours Attained at Kent
by College

Credit Hours	A&S	BUSN	EDUC	F&PA	NURS	PERD
1-25	3%	0%	0%	12%	0%	0%
26-50	11%	9%	16%	20%	6%	0%
51-75	20%	34%	45%	24%	11%	0%
76-100	21%	33%	16%	25%	22%	33%
101-125	34%	20%	9%	13%	44%	67%
126-150	11%	4%	10%	6%	11%	0%
151-175	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%
176+	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%

III. CONCLUSIONS

Students averaged a total of 11 semesters from initial Regional Campus enrollment to graduation at Kent with a bachelors degree. This differs only slightly from an average of 10 total semesters for students starting at Kent. Perhaps more instructive is the fact that the difference in total credit hours to degree at graduation reflected an average difference of only one course (146 compared to 142) between students beginning at the Regional Campuses and students beginning at Kent. There was virtually no difference in grade point averages for students before they relocated to Kent and when they graduated.

Additional more qualitative studies may be necessary to provide more complete information regarding the experiences and perceptions of Regional Campus entrants who continue their studies at Kent.

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